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CATHERINE B. HOLLAN



*Figure 1. Pair of silver sauceboats, 1735-1750, marked "D. YOU", Charleston, S.C. HOA  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , WOA  $3\frac{3}{8}$ , LOA  $6\frac{3}{8}$ . MESDA accession 3407-1, 2.*

## *Daniel Cannon: A Revolutionary "Mechanick" in Charleston*

ROSEMARY NINER ESTES

An exceptional pair of silver sauceboats of South Carolina origin were added to the MESDA collection recently. As objects, they are rare works of art; the extreme scarcity of southern Rococo silver holloware places them among the rarest of all surviving decorative arts. As documents they present an unusual opportunity to historians of material culture to study a group of specific objects in a known context. The sauceboats are part of a relatively large group of eighteenth century artifacts which have the common history of having belonged to Daniel Cannon, master builder and Revolutionary patriot of Charleston. This group includes the two sauceboats and a silver sugar bowl, a portrait of Mrs. Cannon, two chests of drawers, an easy chair, and a candlestand. They were inherited by Martha Cannon upon the death of her father in 1802, then by Daniel Cannon Webb, the builder's step-grandson, and remained among his direct descendants until modern times.<sup>1</sup> Their existence provides an irresistible opportunity to catch a glimpse of life in Charleston during what was probably the most exciting period of the city's history, and to use both the written and the wrought record to observe this time from the viewpoint of an artisan, a member of Charleston's "mechanick" class.

Current methods employed by students of material culture require that objects "speak," and integrate the information thus gained with documentary evidence to advance the study of an earlier era. This approach is based on the theory that objects which survive are also documents of their age, and should be able to

tell us much about the culture in which they were produced, the craftsmen who made them, the people who used them, and the traditions and values which were important to people living at that time and place. This theory is an appealing one, though its application is rarely easy. However, the existence of a group of eighteenth century artifacts, all of which are believed to have been used by one owner at a known time and place, and some of which are attributed to known artisans, provides an unusual forum in which to put the theory to work.

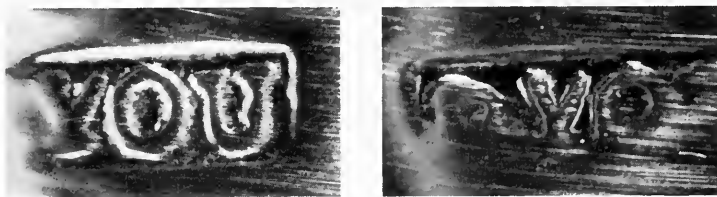


Figure 2. Maker's marks on the sauceboats illustrated in Figure 1.

The silver sauceboats (Fig. 1) bear the maker's mark "D.YOU" in a rectangle on the bottom of each (Fig. 2). Daniel You was a silversmith of early Charleston about whom records are sparse. We know that he had a shop on Broad Street in 1737; in 1747 he notified the public that he had moved to the corner of Broad next to the Market, where he made or mended any kind of gold or silversmith's work in the "neatest manner." In 1743 he was one of the appraisers of the estate of silversmith Andrew Dupuy, and in 1749 performed the same service for the estate of John Terry, also a silversmith. During the same year he joined the South Carolina Society. He was deceased by January of 1749/50, when an inventory of his estate was taken. Two years after You's death, Peter Timothy, publisher of the *South Carolina Gazette*, advertised a theft of silver from his home, and among the articles listed were spoons bearing the "D.YOU" maker's mark.<sup>2</sup> Other than the sauceboats, only six spoons bearing this mark are known today, two of which are in the MESDA collection.

The sauceboats are mid-century Rococo in style, their size rather diminutive and their appearance delicate. Most of the surface is plain, but the emerging demand for surface ornamentation can be seen in the naturalistic leaf forms on the handles, the shell design on the knees, and the repoussé beading which decorates the rims. The cast double-scrolled handles and hoof feet done in the mature Rococo style along with the overall



impression of fragility and asymmetry are proof that this Charleston silversmith was working in the most fashionable mode at the time of his death. The boats were probably among the latest of his work.

The silver sugar bowl (Fig. 3) in the MESDA collection bears the maker's mark "T.Y." touched three times on the bottom of the bowl (Fig. 4). This mark is thought to be that of Thomas You, who began work in Charleston about 1753 and may have been the son of Daniel You. When the latter died in 1750 his estate was administered by Charles You, a barber and periwig maker. Charles You died in 1771, and his administrator was Thomas You, suggesting a possible relationship of father and two sons.<sup>3</sup> Thomas You advertised frequently "at the Sign of the Golden Cup," especially during the 1760's and early 70's (Fig. 5). Although he advertised importations from London on occasion, he usually stressed the fact that he was a working silversmith and would be glad to meet with encouragement "in the working way." By the late 1760's his advertisements illustrate his support for efforts to resist British taxation through non-importation, and his own desire to benefit from the encouragement of local manufactures:

THOMAS YOU  
Working SILVERSMITH  
At the sign of the  
GOLDEN CUP

in Queen Street,

Begs Leave to inform the PUBLIC

THAT he carries on the GOLD and SILVERSMITH'S  
Business in their different branches.—And, as his Depend-  
ance is entirely in the working Part, hopes he may meet  
with Encouragement from those who are Well-Wishers to  
the MANUFACTURES of this Province.<sup>4</sup>

It appears that Thomas You made an effort during the 1760's to perfect his engraving skills; in 1764 he advertised to the public "A Copperplate view of St. Michael's Church, Charles-Town, drawn by himself, and neatly engraved in London." The next year, however, he had "finished a Plate of a West Prospect of St. Philip's," meaning he had done the engraving himself this time, and was seeking subscribers to ascertain the number to be printed. In 1766 he had "drawn and engraved a South



*Figure 3. Silver sugar bowl, 1760-1775, marked "T.Y", attributed to Thomas You, Charleston, S.C. HOA 6½, diameter 4½. MESDA accession 2506.*

PROSPECT of ST. PHILLIP'S CHURCH" which he intended for sale, and hoped for encouragement from the public.<sup>5</sup> From that time on he referred to himself as a working goldsmith, silversmith, jeweller and engraver.

In 1754 Thomas You and Daniel Cannon both became members of the South Carolina Society, a fraternal and charitable organization. In the mid-1760's and during the Revolutionary period both were active in the patriot cause, indicating that their

association continued over many years. Thomas You was taken prisoner by the British when they occupied Charleston in 1780 and spent some time on a prison ship in Charleston harbor; by 1781 he had gained his freedom by renewing his allegiance to the Crown and was again practicing his trade in occupied Charleston. He died in May of 1786 after a long illness.<sup>6</sup>




*Figure 4. Maker's marks on the sugar bowl illustrated in Figure 3.*

The sugar bowl corresponds nicely with Thomas You's advertisements of 1765, which specifically mention "chas'd and plain" sugar dishes and coffee pots; "chased" was the contemporary term for the type of decoration used on the Cannon sugar bowl. After the repoussé work was raised by hammers and other tools from inside, the design was punched or "chased" on the exterior surfaces to define and model the floral and leaf forms. Since You's ads do not mention this technique earlier, and since 1765 seems to have been a time of prosperity for Daniel Cannon, the MESDA sugar bowl may well date about that time. The naturalistic motifs, asymmetrical decoration, and repoussé technique seen in this sugar bowl were typical of the Rococo style in silver, as were the cast pineapple finial and reverse-curved base. The inverted pear shape, or "double-bellied" as the form was called then, replaced earlier pear and globular shapes, and assists in dating this sugar bowl in the mature Rococo style of the 1760's.

All three of the silver objects in the Cannon group bear the initials D<sup>C</sup>M; this is engraved on the handle of each sauceboat and on the body of the sugar bowl (Fig. 6). Examination of the engraving cuts indicates that all three pieces appear to have been initialed by the same hand.<sup>7</sup> Thus the sauceboats could not have been engraved by Daniel You at the time of purchase, as might be expected, and the initials on the sauceboats are not those of

Daniel and Martha Cannon, his first wife, but those of Daniel and his second wife Mary, whom he married in 1755. Perhaps Daniel and Mary had all of their silver marked at the same time, possibly by Thomas You at the time the sugar bowl was purchased.



## THOMAS YOU,

*At the sign of the Golden Cup, has just imported in the Beaufain, Capt. Curling, from London, sundry pieces of plate; which, with what he had by him before, he will sell for ready cash cheap, to wit.*

### PLAIN two handle caudle

cupe, chas'd and plain sugar dishes, Tankards, pint mugs, punch strainers, glass cruets tipp'd with silver, steel watch chains and keys, neat smelling bottles tipp'd and wash'd, shoe and stock buckles, stone and plain rings, necklaces of all sorts, chas'd coffee-pots, punch bowls, tea pots, milk pots, waiters, and salt-cellars with glasses, Pinchbeck shoe buckles, pepper boxes, silver handle knives and forks, sleeve buttons in setts, gold and silver watches, ladies trinkets, silver buckles, &c.

Figure 5. 1765 advertisement by Thomas You in the South Carolina Gazette.

There is still good reason to date the sauceboats about the time of Daniel Cannon's first marriage in 1750, however; Daniel You was dead by January of 1750, and the style of the boats precludes a date much earlier. It is very possible that this silver was a wedding gift to Daniel and Martha, though another possibility is suggested by examination of the estate inventory of Thomas Doughty, victualler of Charleston, taken in August of 1755 by Mary Doughty, his widow and administratrix. Mary and Thomas Doughty had been running a tavern. Listed in Doughty's inventory were many of the objects one would expect to find among the effects of an innkeeper: many bedsteads, including several of mahogany, with their bedding and "furniture"; seventeen brass candlesticks; two backgammon tables and "Cheque Boards"; a billiard table with sticks and balls; various wines and other spirits; and a long list of items needed for management of a sizeable establishment. The inventory includes silver objects totalling 169 ounces in weight; among the silver is "1 pair of boats." Perhaps these are the sauceboats now in MESDA's collection; certainly they would have been in Mary Doughty's possession when she married Daniel Cannon less than three months later.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note that although the Doughty silver included many spoons, a pair of salts, a pair of pepper boxes, the boats, a tankard and pint mug, a punch strainer, and many other items, plus a milk pot, there was no sugar bowl. Perhaps Mary and Daniel were filling in missing pieces when they purchased the Thomas You sugar bowl in the 1760's.



*Figure 6. Owners' initials engraved on sauceboats, Figure 1, and sugar bowl, Figure 2.*

Where Daniel and Thomas You received their training is unknown. If indeed Thomas was the son of Daniel it reasonably can be assumed that he learned the trade from his father. It is possible that Thomas' apprenticeship was interrupted by his father's death; if he was still a minor, that could explain why he was not involved in the administration of Daniel's estate.

When Daniel Cannon died in 1802 his estate inventory included 230 ounces of "plate" valued at \$1 per ounce.<sup>9</sup> The three pieces which are known to survive provide insight into Cannon's wealth and taste, since the purchase of silver was an unmistakable indication of prosperity. Cannon's later prominence in politics and his honorary title of "esquire" were still in the future when these objects were acquired, and his major business activities and wealth were yet to be realized. Even so, Cannon was purchasing silver holloware of the most fashionable style, and, significantly, patronizing local silversmiths.

The portrait in the group of Cannon objects is that of Mary Trusler Doughty Cannon, Daniel's second wife (Fig. 7). She appears as a mature matron, which probably dates the painting in the 1760's. The portrait is attributed to Jeremiah Theus, who was Charleston's most popular portrait painter for many years. The Theus family were Swiss immigrants who settled in Orangeburg Township in the mid-1730's. Jeremiah was in Charleston by September, 1740, when he advertised as a limner and announced that he had moved to the Market Square, where ladies and gentlemen could "have their Pictures drawn"; he also did "Landskips of all sizes" as well as "Crests and Coats of Arms for Coaches or Chaises." For those in the country he was "willing to wait on them at their respective Plantations." In 1744 he advertised that he was opening an evening school at his house in Friend Street, where young gentlemen and ladies would be taught the art of drawing.<sup>10</sup> In 1745 he joined the South Carolina Society, and by 1748 was an officer of that organization.<sup>11</sup> In 1751 Peter Manigault, a young Charlestonian then in London, sent to his mother in South Carolina a portrait of himself painted by Allen Ramsay, with the request that she show it to Theus and ask his opinion of its quality: "I desire Mr. Theus may see it, as soon as is convenient after it arrives . . . I'll be extremely obliged to you, if you'll let me know his Judgment; . . ." He then pointed out to his mother that she could see his taste in dress by the picture, for everything painted there was his own clothing. Since he had described Allen Ramsay as "one of the best Hands in England," his letter illuminates our view of the respect which Theus enjoyed among the gentry of South Carolina.<sup>12</sup> Several portraits by Theus, including one of his daughter Anne Theus Lee, wife of the watchmaker William Lee, are in the MESDA collection.

Theus, who referred to himself as a "limner" throughout his thirty-year career, painted likenesses of Charlestonians of all social groups including a number of artisans and their wives. When he died in 1774, the Charleston newspapers referred to him as "an ingenious Artist and an honest man."<sup>13</sup> His biographer, Margaret Simons Middleton, summarized his contribution to the life of Charleston in these words: "He may be described as the early South Carolina artist who took the beauty out of women's faces, but achieved likenesses satisfactory to his generation; as the man who reproduced the texture of silk and satin and filmy lace, but subordinated them to the personality of the wearer; as a con-



*Figure 7. Mary Trusler Doughty Cannon (1724-March 8, 1789). Oil on canvas. 30 x 25 $\frac{1}{8}$ . Attributed to Jeremiah Theus, 1755-1770. Private collection. MESDA research file S-8195.*

scientious limner whose careful technique and splendid craftsmanship stand out and elicit respect today. He was, perhaps, not a great artist; but his talent and skill were great enough for him to place on canvas the features, dress, and character of the people of his place and time . . ."<sup>14</sup> Implicit in Theus' paintings are indications of the sitter's social position; Mary Cannon was the wife of an artisan and is dressed accordingly, without the laces and elegance which appear in Theus portraits of gentlewomen. This fits with known eighteenth-century attitudes toward pro-

priety in dress according to one's station in life. Since the same clothing appears repeatedly in Theus' work it is obvious that his sitters did not necessarily own the dress shown in their portraits. Peter Manigault's statement to his mother that he owned the clothing in the Ramsay portrait is evidence that this was not always the case. Theus' long popularity in Charleston is proof that he pleased his customers; the dress and accessories used must have been accepted as proper. In spite of the prosperity of the Cannons and the growing respect which Daniel enjoyed in the community, Mary did not step out of her sphere as a member of the working class in this portrait. Others of the Cannons' social group were patrons of Theus, including Cannon's close political ally, the upholsterer Edward Weyman. No portrait of Daniel Cannon is known, however.

The earliest of the Cannon furniture is a chest of drawers in the late Baroque or "Queen Anne" style (Fig. 8). This rather small, conservative chest is made of mahogany with all of the interior construction of cypress except for mahogany drawer stops. The top is set into continuous dovetail joints run on the upper sides of the case; there is no rail between the top and the uppermost drawer, a feature which seems typical of Charleston work. The drawers reveal evidence of early cotter-pin brasses which had been replaced by wooden knobs (Fig. 9). The chest seems to date earlier than either of Cannon's two marriages, probably having been made during the 1740's. Its earlier history is unknown; it is interesting to note, however, that the 1755 inventory of Mary Cannon's first husband includes one chest of drawers made of mahogany.

The second chest of drawers (Fig. 10) is in the later, full Rococo style with ogee feet, fluted quarter columns, and applied cockbeading on the edges of the drawers. The primary wood is mahogany with cypress secondary except for mahogany drawer stops. The top and bed moldings are similar to the earlier chest, and again there is no rail between the top and the uppermost drawer, which in this case is fitted with compartments (Fig. 11). This second chest of drawers seems to date about 1770, a time when Daniel Cannon was prospering in business and active in politics, and its more sumptuous detailing contrasts with the functional simplicity of the earlier piece.

The Cannon easy chair (Fig. 12) shows in its form a blending of both late Baroque and Rococo styles, its rear legs showing typical Charleston robustness with their sharp rake and block-like feet.



Of mahogany, with mahogany, ash, cypress and tulip poplar in secondary positions, the chair probably was made about 1750-60. The Cannon candlestand is entirely of mahogany (Fig. 13); its turned pedestal is similar to another known example with a Charleston history.<sup>15</sup> Dating this piece is difficult, but it probably was made in the 1760's or early 1770's.



*Figure 8. Chest of drawers, Charleston, 1730-1760, mahogany with cypress and mahogany secondary woods. HOA 31, W'OA 33, DOA 20. MESDA accession 2785, gift of Mr. and Mrs. E. Norwood Robinson.*

There is one other surviving example of material evidence which portrays the capacity of Daniel Cannon to adapt to the times. When he died in 1802 at the age of 76, he was building a new house for himself overlooking the mill pond near his lumber business at Cannon Mills. Mary had predeceased him in 1789, having outlived her own three daughters; the unfinished house

was willed to Cannon's daughter Martha,<sup>16</sup> and survives today on what is now Calhoun (then Boundary) Street (Fig. 14). The house, which originally was built with details in the Adam style, was updated in the mid-nineteenth century with the addition of Greek Revival styling. The history of this house and the clues it might contain for identification of other work by Cannon remain to be examined by an architectural historian. That the design of the house was in the latest Neoclassical style, however, readily provides an image of a man who continued to learn and be productive to the end of a long and busy life.



*Figure 9. Detail of chest of drawers in Figure 8, showing evidence of original cotterpins inside drawer.*

The earliest documentary evidence concerning Daniel Cannon reveals that at about the age of ten he arrived at St. Simon's Island, Georgia, with his father, Daniel, a carpenter, and his older brother Joseph. They were listed among the earliest settlers of Frederica in 1736.<sup>17</sup> Shortly after their arrival Joseph wrote to Henry Flitcroft, a London architect, describing the island, progress of settlement, and the primitive shelter they had built for themselves. The letter contains Joseph's statement of pride in what they had accomplished: ". . . we are the forwardest of any person in this place and live . . . happy and . . . well contented and hope so to continue . . ."<sup>18</sup> For a time the father prospered as a housewright; it is interesting, however, that even though he was a carpenter he was instrumental in convincing a number of the settlers that they should build their houses of brick. Their farm on the north end of the island, which the Cannons stocked with cattle and hogs, became known as Cannon's Point.<sup>19</sup> The Spanish threat and other difficulties caused many of the settlers to leave within a few years, however, and in 1740 the Cannons moved to Charleston. Joseph reached his majority in 1742 and returned to England; Daniel Sr. died in August of 1743,<sup>20</sup> and the younger Daniel, seventeen, remained in South Carolina.

The next record of Daniel Cannon appears in St. Philip's Church register, when he married Martha Winn on 8 March 1749/50. A daughter, Martha, was born and shortly thereafter the first Mrs. Cannon died. In 1755 Daniel married Mary Trusler Doughty,<sup>21</sup> widow of Thomas Doughty, who had died just a few months before, leaving Mary with five small children. The records of St. Philip's actually show that two additional sons had been born to the Doughtys, but they seem not to have survived.<sup>22</sup> The combined family thus created seems to have been a happy one; although the two Doughty boys kept their own father's name, Mary's three daughters grew up using the name Cannon. Several more children were born to Daniel and Mary in quick succession, but none seems to have lived to adulthood; one son survived to about the age of five.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Doughty, Jr. apparently learned the carpenter's trade with his stepfather and by the early 1770's was in partnership with him as Cannon & Doughty.<sup>24</sup> The number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren which were to be named for Daniel Cannon testifies to the loving relationship he must have enjoyed with his stepchildren.

Cannon's growing reputation as a builder is seen in a 1766 advertisement describing a house for sale on King Street: "an exceeding good house . . . , not three years old, built by Mr. Cannon, and finished in the best manner."<sup>25</sup> He acquired a plantation called Oakland, lying east of the public road to Goose Creek about ten miles outside Charleston, by combining three tracts of land purchased in 1759, 1762 and 1772; Oakland remained in his possession as a working plantation until 1800, when he sold it to Mrs. Hannah Heyward.<sup>26</sup> He also owned a small farm about a mile from town "with about a dozen hands thereon"; in 1768 he advertised for a manager for this farm.<sup>27</sup> It may have been the same property referred to in 1767 by Robert Hunter, gardener, as "Mr. Daniel Cannon's Garden up the Path."<sup>28</sup> He owned land on Meeting Street in 1766, and two years later sold to John Paul Grimke, jeweller, a lot at the corner of Queen and Meeting Streets.<sup>29</sup> In 1767 an advertisement appeared specifying lots to be sold on Tradd, Broad and a new street called Orange; plans could be seen at Daniel Cannon's, through Robert Wells, vendue master, or at the shop of silversmith Alexander Petrie. This was the area known as the Orange Garden, which had been purchased by Petrie; Cannon's involvement in the development was not specified. By 1764 the Cannon family was living in a house he had built on Queen Street, next door to the present Dock Street

Theatre, where he lived until his death in 1802.<sup>30</sup>

In 1767 Cannon began to combine his building activities with commercial lumber production. He entered into partnership with five other men to erect saw mills on the Edisto River, a partnership which was terminated in 1779, twelve years later, when Thomas Ferguson bought the property from the others for £250,000 South Carolina currency. At the time of sale the property was described as consisting of several tracts of land, mill houses, dams, grist and saw mills, saws and timber.<sup>31</sup> At about the time of this partnership in 1767 Cannon also entered the coastwise mercantile trade with the purchase of a schooner, the *Cannon*, together with Moses Kirkland, millwright, and John Marley, tanner, both of whom were involved in the Edisto saw mill venture. It seems likely that the schooner was being used in connection with the lumber business; the *Cannon* had been sold by 1774, when it was registered to a new owner.<sup>32</sup>



*Figure 10. Chest of drawers, Charleston, 1760-1775, mahogany with cypress and mahogany secondary woods. HOA 31¼, WOA 36¼, DOA 20½. MESDA accession 2787, gift of Mrs. Ralph P. Hanes.*



*Figure 11. Detail of chest of drawers in Figure 10, showing fitted interior of top drawer.*

Cannon appears in the account book of Thomas Elfe, the Charleston cabinetmaker, several times between 1771 and 1774 when "Cannon & Doughty" purchased mahogany, and on one occasion "mated fret work."<sup>33</sup> This would indicate that they were using mahogany and fret work in building; while the mahogany may have been used for various purposes such as balustrades and doors, the fret probably was intended for chimneypieces. It also implies that Cannon's mills may not have imported mahogany; the huge acreage accompanying the mill properties points to processing native South Carolina woods.

The pre-war years were busy ones for Daniel Cannon; in addition to involvement in politics, his business activities in building, planting and lumbering continued, as did his land purchases. Two tracts totalling 800 acres on Cattel's Creek in Berkeley County were acquired in 1774.<sup>34</sup> Continual acquisition of property seems to verify the financial success of his varied business ventures; it has been estimated that Cannon was one of the richest mechanics in Charleston.<sup>35</sup> Not many of Charleston's artisans were doing as well as Cannon, however; difficult times were experienced by some craftsmen after 1766 because of a shortage of money in circulation.<sup>36</sup> Cannon's activities did not slow, but he began to advertise for unpaid contracts and went

to court to collect debts on several occasions.<sup>37</sup> His sympathy for the plight of his fellow mechanics becomes obvious, however, in the record of his political activities during the pre-war period.

Cannon's community involvement seems to have begun in 1754 when he joined the South Carolina Society. In 1762 he was one of the founders of the Fellowship Society, whose purpose was "to afford Relief to many poor distressed persons in this province"; their immediate aim was to build a hospital for the care of indigent persons with physical or mental illnesses. The hospital was never accomplished, but the society grew in numbers and wealth and succeeded in providing funds for the poor, offering aid to widows and orphans of their members, and providing education for poor children in a free school. Their political agitation helped secure passage of an act of the assembly in 1768 to provide aid for the poor and ill.<sup>38</sup>

The Fellowship Society was composed primarily of mechanics; their leaders were the same group who became active in defending American rights in the Stamp Act crisis of 1765. Richard Walsh, in his book, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty*, argues convincingly that the artisans of Charleston were a distinct class whose economic interests placed them in a radical anti-British position in pre-Revolutionary politics, favoring measures of resistance to British mercantile policies and eventually open revolt.<sup>39</sup> Daniel Cannon was a political leader of this group of tradesmen in Charleston throughout the period and his position on issues can be understood through the record of their activities.

By 1768 Cannon was a member of the John Wilkes Club, a forthrightly political organization of mechanics and others who broke with tradition by nominating their own slate of candidates for the assembly. Prior to this time the artisan class had been without representation in the provincial government of South Carolina; at this time, the candidates chosen were all gentlemen, selected for their sympathy to the concerns of the mechanics. Christopher Gadsden, a Charleston factor and leading political radical, became their spokesman, and it was this group who first met at a live oak tree in Mr. Mazyck's pasture on 1 October 1766 to express support for the boycott of English goods. The "Liberty Tree" became a gathering place for public meetings of supporters of the cause of American rights. Peter Timothy, in describing this first meeting at the Liberty Tree, commented on the change in political enthusiasm from "general supineness" that prevailed before the meeting to "great diligence . . . in canvassing, and

interest making by the friends of the different candidates [for the assembly] as well by others as by the Mechanics.'"<sup>40</sup>



*Figure 12. Easy chair, Charleston, 1750-1770, mahogany with mahogany, ash, cypress and tulip poplar secondary woods. HOA 45¾, W'OA 31½, DOA 29. MESDA accession 2788-2.*

The record of Daniel Cannon's involvement in political developments of the pre-war period seems to support Walsh's contention that economic considerations motivated the mechanics

to resist British policies. Their support for a boycott of British imports and encouragement of American manufactures was natural, since such measures would eliminate their foreign competition and their own production would thereby receive badly needed encouragement. These measures did not succeed for long, however; repeal of the Stamp Act brought renewed competition from imported goods, and a shortage of currency caused grave financial problems for the tradesmen as well as the planters of the colony. Then the Townshend Act of 1767 added a new burden on artisans who used the taxed items (paint and glass, for example) in their work. More meetings were held under the Liberty Tree, more toasts were drunk to American manufactures, and the mechanics of Charleston, led by Edward Weyman the upholsterer, Daniel Cannon the carpenter, and others, became more radical in their political position.

It was Christopher Gadsden who managed to find a compromise in 1769 which allowed the planters, merchants and mechanics to join together in support of a plan to halt importation of British goods. To enforce the boycott, a committee composed of thirteen mechanics, thirteen planters and thirteen merchants was appointed; this was the beginning of representation by mechanics in South Carolina government, and Daniel Cannon's name led the list of thirteen.<sup>41</sup> The entry by tradesmen into politics, however, was met with ridicule by Charleston aristocrats. William Henry Drayton wrote of the vulgarity of a man who steps outside his own sphere: "The industrious mechanic [is] a useful and essential part of society" but "Nature never intended that such men should be profound politicians, or able statesmen." Gadsden, himself a gentleman, defended the mechanics as those who are most affected by oppression, and therefore most attentive to the cause of liberty. He mentioned the fact that wealthy men "are not wanting . . . amongst the farmers and mechanics . . ."; he may well have had Cannon in mind when he said this.<sup>42</sup>

In 1770 the Townshend Act was repealed and the boycott ended. A tax on tea was the only remaining British claim to right of taxation in the colonies, and confrontation on this issue in Charleston did not occur until 1773, when the arrival of a shipment of that commodity led to agreement among planters, mechanics and merchants to stop importation of tea. Daniel Cannon was the only tradesman on a committee appointed to secure signatures of support for the resolution; the others were





*Figure 13. Candlestand, Charleston, 1750-1780, mahogany throughout. HOA 29, top diameter 16¾. MESDA accession 2788-1.*

In the spring of 1774 the pace of Cannon's community and political involvement accelerated; he was re-elected to the vestry of St. Philip's Church, a position gained in 1765 and held for most of his life; he was appointed firemaster, an office not formerly held by mechanics; he became president of the St. George's Society and senior warden of the South Carolina Society. In July of that year he was one of fifteen tradesmen elected to the General Committee of the Province (a correspondence committee, sometimes called the Committee of Ninety-Nine), which in turn summoned a Provincial Congress that gradually assumed the legislative powers of the Province. Cannon was one of thirteen artisans who were members of this first Provincial Congress.<sup>44</sup>

Cannon's military activities were minor, since he was fifty years old in 1776. After the British evacuated the forts outside Charleston in 1775, he was given responsibility for supervising construction of fortifications on Sullivan's Island. The Provincial Congress appropriated £4,000 for workmen and materials to complete this task.<sup>45</sup> When the British attacked the city in 1776 Cannon was captain of Cannon's Volunteers in the Charleston Battalion of Artillery, which served during the successful defense of the city. In May of 1777 he advertised for 100 negro workers for the public works, possibly for the further construction of Charleston's defenses. In addition, the record shows that he lent £30,000 to the state government during the war.<sup>46</sup>

Charleston endured hard times while the war was being fought to the north. Food shortages, severe inflation, and the scarcity of tools and materials made life difficult, particularly for the mechanics. The fire of January, 1778, destroyed much of Charleston, including the newly-founded Charleston Museum. The Cannon home on Queen Street survived, however, and for a time thereafter the trustees of the museum held their meetings there. A room from Cannon's Queen Street house has been reassembled, using the original paneling, in the present Charleston Museum — perhaps the same room in which the trustees of the Revolutionary years held their meetings.<sup>47</sup>

1778 was also the year in which Cannon and other artisans founded the Palmetto Society for the purpose of aiding veterans of the war. In this year a new Constitution for South Carolina was approved by the Assembly, the Declaration of Independence was officially endorsed by the state, and ties with Britain were finally severed. An oath of allegiance was required of all inhabitants over sixteen, and many Tories left the state. In the spring of 1780 Charleston fell to the British, and many of the patriots were taken prisoner.

Daniel Cannon must have had a difficult decision to make at this time. The record shows that his sympathies were wholly on the patriot side; for years his leadership skills and great energy had been expended in the cause, not to mention a considerable portion of his fortune. The *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives* states that he took British protection after the fall of Charleston in order to safeguard his extensive property.<sup>48</sup> There may have been additional reasons affecting his decision, including matters of family health.<sup>49</sup> Cannon's involvement in the clandestine activity carried on in

Charleston to obtain supplies for the rebels fighting in up-country South Carolina is not known, but the role seems characteristic for him. Money, food and intelligence were collected and smuggled out of the city all during the British occupation. Whether or not he was involved in this, his continued participation in the cause came to light in January of 1782 when he was elected to the Jacksonborough Assembly, an alternative government of patriots who were then in control of most of South Carolina outside occupied Charleston. On 28 April 1782, Cannon and his family were among a list of persons ordered out of the city by the British.<sup>50</sup>



*Figure 14. The frame "double" house at 274 Calhoun Street, Charleston, which was being constructed by Daniel Cannon when he died in 1802; the house was completed by his executrix.*

The end of the war brought renewed activity for Cannon in several areas. The ravages of war and the great fire of 1778, which destroyed 252 dwellings in Charleston, had created a demand for new construction and resulted in a boom period for those in the building trades. Cannon subdivided into lots a tract of 90 acres of land on Charleston Neck he had purchased in 1761;<sup>51</sup> part of suburban Charleston, it lay just outside the boundaries

of the city, and was soon to be known as Cannonsboro. A series of land transactions record Cannon's sale of lots on streets named Cannon, Doughty, Pinckney, Elliott, Thomas, Smith, President, Bee. Many of the purchasers were mechanics with whom Cannon had been associated during the years of political turmoil. Sales of these lots continued throughout the remainder of Cannon's life and for some time after his death in 1802. The land records do not reveal whether or not he was building houses on the lots, but this seems a fair assumption, since among the slaves that he owned at the time of his death were several valuable carpenters and a bricklayer.<sup>52</sup>

For a few years his land transactions were limited to sales of these lots. In 1790 he began buying again: first a tract of 1,415 acres on the Edisto River just two miles above the Edisto Saw Mills which now belonged to the estate of Thomas Ferguson; a month later he bought another tract of 3,050 acres on the Edisto. In 1795 he purchased 84 acres of marsh land on the Ashley River on Charleston Neck, and another 7  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres, apparently high ground bordering the marsh. In 1796 he made the largest purchase of all: 37 tracts including more than 30,000 acres in Berkeley, Colleton and Granville Counties, some bordering on the Edisto and others on the Savannah River.<sup>53</sup> A newspaper report gives us the reason for these purchases:<sup>54</sup>

CHARLESTON.  
*Thursday, October 24.*

It is with pleasure we announce to the citizens of Charleston, and the public in general, the completion of those extensive *Water Saw Mills*, in the vicinity of this city, constructed for Mr. Cannon, by that celebrated artist, Mr. Lucas. The advantages which commercial gentlemen, who export lumber, will experience from the erection of these Mills, will be great, as they are so well calculated to carry into execution, *at the shortest notice*, any orders, however extensive. Those who wish to build will likewise find them of infinite advantage. While we announce to the public the completion of these Mills, we cannot but hope that the industrious and indefatigable gentleman for whom they are built, will meet with that liberal encouragement from the citizens of Charleston, which an undertaking of so expensive a nature, at his period of life, most certainly deserves.

Cannon's post-war business activities included a partnership with Thomas Bennett, architect and builder, who designed the Charleston Orphan House in 1792. The contract for building the Orphan House was let jointly to Anthony Toomer, bricklayer, and Cannon and Bennett, carpenters. Cannon and Bennett also advertised as partners in the lumber business.<sup>55</sup>

Cannon's political activities continued after the war as well. The mechanics had won some of their revolutionary objectives, particularly representation in government, but other compelling problems remained. Aligned with the merchants in the post-war period in favor of hard-money policies, the artisans consequently were opposed to the planters, who were continually in debt to both tradesmen and merchants and favored the issue of paper money. The mechanics also opposed use of slave artisans by planters though their position in this matter was paradoxical in view of the fact that the mechanics themselves continued to train slave artisans and sell them to planters as a means of making a profit, thus creating their own competition. Strong feelings between wartime factions were exacerbated by legislative acts of banishment and confiscation of the estates of Tories, which had been passed by the Jacksonborough Assembly and now seemed arbitrary and unfair. Mob violence erupted again and again, and Charleston was in a state of turmoil for many months. Passage of an act incorporating the city of Charleston in August of 1783 helped to promote peace; incorporation had been one of the aims of the tradesmen since 1765. They could now bring pressure to bear on the city officeholders, among whom were their own representatives. Incorporation eventually led to a split in the mechanics party between the radicals and conservative property owners, who had become members of the establishment and officeholders and necessarily opposed rioting and street violence. Those like Daniel Cannon who labored for constructive solutions to problems were successful in obtaining concessions from city and state government, which began to encourage local manufacturing, permitted incorporation of artisans' societies, and attempted to regulate slave-mechanic labor. In 1784 mechanics were exempted from taxes on the profits of their trade, and rising tariffs began to protect American manufactures. Economic depression after 1785 brought an end to the period of post-war upheaval.<sup>56</sup>

One very obvious missing link in the Daniel Cannon story is the lack of his own written word. No diaries, letters, or account

books survive to reveal his thoughts; only his actions speak for him, however eloquently. There is one record which may reasonably be seen as an expression of his thought, however. In 1783 he was president of the new Carpenters' Society, formed to manage the common concerns of this group of artisans. The society was accused by planters of organizing for the purpose of monopolizing trade and fixing prices during the post-war building boom. The Society's reply to these charges was indignant: "we . . . beg leave to inform you, that you are at liberty to call us combiners or what you please, the fact is, we are formed into companies for the management of our concerns, have chose our proper officers, and intend as freemen to support our rights." They added that farmers and lawyers were not "adequate judges of tradesmens concerns."<sup>57</sup>

Cannon was also involved in the formation of the Mechanics Society in 1784, and continued for much of his life to represent his class in the South Carolina legislature. He was elected to the Second Provincial Congress in 1775 and to the First (1776), Second (1776-78), Third (1779-80), Sixth (1785-86), Seventh (1787-88), and Eighth (1789-90) General Assemblies. As a delegate to the state convention in 1788 he voted to ratify the federal Constitution — a moment in his life that must have had great personal meaning. The list of other public offices he held over the years is too long to repeat; his memberships, in addition to those already mentioned, included the Mount Sion Society and the Charleston Library Society.<sup>58</sup>

The written record tells us a great deal about Daniel Cannon. Through him the world of eighteenth-century Charleston can be seen from the point of view of a relatively inarticulate group — the city's mechanics. Cannon's life spanned most of the century, and his social and political mobility mirrored the progress of Charleston's artisan class toward full citizenship and participation in public affairs. He was not the only leader of this group, for others could be named who were just as active and influential. He was not the only one of his class who succeeded in business, acquired wealth, and held positions of political responsibility; there were others. Daniel Cannon's life unfolds through a story of action rather than words, a record of enormous activity, courage, and consistent striving toward important objectives. His motivation was the betterment of his fellow craftsmen as well as himself, so that his advancement and that of the mechanics he represented were intertwined. His organizational abilities may

have influenced the events of the Revolutionary era more than we know. A survey of his career demonstrates that he was a constructive leader who used the power of radicalism to achieve clearly defined aims. Certainly he left Charleston a more democratic city than he found it, and the mechanics of Charleston with more control over their own affairs than they enjoyed at the time he arrived on the scene as a young man in 1740.

The material record gives us a more intimate view of Daniel Cannon, the man, and it is here that Mary Cannon also emerges. Her portrait is that of a strong but gentle woman, who must have contributed quietly to the record of Daniel's accomplishments. How much more complete would be our understanding of Cannon if only his portrait existed! There is no hint in the record to tell of his appearance. Through the surviving objects we have a glimpse into the home on Queen Street where so many Cannon children and grandchildren were raised, where the museum trustees and other organizations held their meetings, and where the momentous events of the Revolutionary period were part of personal experience. Cannon's household inventory is impressive, revealing very comfortable living; those objects which survive today tell us of Cannon's taste, and no doubt Mary's as well. The progression of style portrays an awareness of fashion, but the newer items coexisted with less fashionable ones in a home that must have been conservative enough to care for possessions accumulated over many years.

The Cannon furnishings also tell us that Daniel Cannon patronized local silversmiths and cabinetmakers of Charleston, in harmony with the principles which guided his Revolutionary politics. Perhaps Charleston's artisans were their own best customers, in protest of the prevailing preference for imported merchandise. This seems logical in view of the mechanics' long fight for a share of the market. The inventory of Cannon's personal property taken in 1803 (see Appendix) includes many items which are not likely to have been of Charleston origin, however. The fifty-four pieces of furniture identified as mahogany may well have been Charleston made. The twenty-four Windsor chairs and the twenty straw-bottomed hickory chairs are more likely to be examples of northern origin coming into Charleston via the coastal trade.

The survival of the Cannon household furnishings over so many years testifies to a family tradition of respect for their original owners, an impression which is reinforced by documentary

evidence. Many of Cannon's grandchildren and their children were named for him and for his daughter Martha, who acted as mother for nine nieces and nephews after the early deaths of her three step-sisters. This alone would stand as proof of the respect and love which they enjoyed among the family. On one occasion, however, the record verbalizes this sentiment: Hopson Pinckney had married Daniel Cannon's step-daughter Elizabeth in 1777. Elizabeth died in 1787, leaving a daughter, Anna Maria. When Pinckney died in 1794 he willed to Anna Maria land which he had acquired from his "ever honoured and much respected Father in law Daniel Cannon Esquire."<sup>59</sup> Both the written and the wrought record prove that Cannon had earned the honor and respect of many people by the end of his long and productive life.

*Mrs. Estes is Archivist for MESDA.*



## FOOTNOTES

1. Cannon's will of 24 June 1802 bequeathed all his household furnishings and plate to his daughter Martha Cannon; see Charleston County *Wills* No. 29, 1800-1807 (transcript), Book D, p. 390. Martha's will, proved 11 November 1814, bequeathed to her "son" (actually her nephew whom she raised from infancy) Daniel Cannon Webb "all the plate and the drawing room furniture"; the remaining furnishings went to her nieces Sarah, Elizabeth and Bella Wakefield. See Charleston County *Wills*, Vol. 32, 1807-1818 (transcript), p. 851. The pieces known to exist today all descended in a direct line from Daniel Cannon Webb.
2. *South Carolina Gazette*, 5 November 1737, 25 June 1747, 17 Sept. 1750; Charleston County *Wills*, etc. (transcript), Vol. 71, p. 317; Vol. 77A, pp. 119 and 367; Vol. 78B, pp. 603-609. *Editor's note*: It should be noted that the study of Daniel You silver has been confused somewhat by the existence of a relatively large group of silver, largely in the Continental Baroque style, which bears the mark "D•Y," all of which has been attributed to You. The MESDA staff, however, has been unable to substantiate this attribution by either historical or stylistic means.
3. *South Carolina Gazette*, 17 Sept. 1750 and 5 Sept. 1771; S.C. Court of Ordinary record, 18 July 1771, published in *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (hereinafter cited as SCHGM), Vol. 45, p. 44, Elizabeth H. Jervey, ed.
4. *South Carolina Gazette*, 15 Nov. 1770; also 19 Feb. 1756, 17 Nov. 1759 (supplement), 30 January 1762, 27 August 1763 (supplement), 8 June 1765, 13 April 1756, 21 March 1771, 8 Oct. 1772, 30 Jan. 1775; *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 17 Dec. 1765, 2 Dec. 1766, 18 Nov. 1766, 8 July 1766, 7 April 1767, 30 June 1767, 1 March 1768, 2 May 1769, 4 July 1769.
5. *South Carolina Gazette*, 1 Oct. 1764; *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 17 Dec. 1765 and 8 July 1766.
6. Charleston County *Wills*, etc. (transcript), Vol. 86A, p. 292; *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, 26 May 1786, compiled by Mabel L. Webber in SCHGM, Vol. XX, p. 143; Richard Walsh, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty* (University of S.C. Press, 1959), p. 98n.; E. Milby Burton, *South Carolina Silversmiths 1690-1860*, pp. 203-206.
7. Examination by John Bivins of the MESDA staff.
8. Charleston County *Wills*, etc. (transcript), Vol. 82B, p. 641. S.C. Court of Common Pleas records of 1757 include two suits by Daniel Cannon to collect debts owed to Thomas Doughty's estate; see *Judgment Rolls* Box 43B, #2A, and Box 44A, #83A. See record of their marriage in *Register of St. Philip's Parish . . . 1754-1810*, D.E. Huger Smith & A. S. Salley, Jr. (Univ. of S.C. Press, 1971), p. 142.
9. Charleston County *Inventories*, Vol. D, p. 197, 8 March 1803.
10. *South Carolina Gazette*, 6 Sept. 1740, 22 Oct. 1744; Margaret Simons Middleton, *Jeremiah Theus, Colonial Artist of Charles Town* (University of S.C. Press, 1953), chapter 2, "The Theus Family."

11. Charleston County *Wills, etc.* (transcript), Vol. 75a, pp. 165-189; Middleton, *Jeremiah Theus*, p.42.
12. SCHGM, Vol. 15, pp. 276-278.
13. *South Carolina Gazette*, 23 May 1774; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 20 May 1774, quoted in SCHGM, Vol. 17, p. 88, Mable L. Webber, ed.
14. Middleton, *Jeremiah Theus*, p. 13.
15. MESDA research file S-8796. Private collection.
16. Charleston County *Wills No. 29, 1800-1807* (transcript), Book D, p. 390. *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser*, 10 March 1789.
17. *A List of the Early Settlers of Georgia*, ed. by E. Merton Coulter & Albert B. Saye (University of Georgia Press, 1949), Pt. 1, "Persons Who Went from Europe to Georgia at the Trustees' Charge," p. 8.
18. *General Oglethorpe's Georgia, Colonial Letters 1733-1743*, ed. by Mills Lane, Vol. 1, p. 282 (Beehive Press, 1975). Letter dated November 8, 1736.
19. "A Brief Account of the Causes that have Retarded the Progress of the Colony of Georgia in America; . . .", London, 1743, *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, Vol. II, p. 110, deposition of John Roberson and Joseph Cannon concerning conditions in Frederica, taken in Charleston, 29 November 1741.
20. *Register of St. Philip's Parish . . . 1720-1758*, A. S. Salley, Jr., ed. (University of S.C. Press, 1971), p. 273.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 191; *Register of St. Philip's Parish . . . 1754-1810*, E. E. Huger Smith & A. S. Salley, Jr., eds. (University of S.C. Press, 1971), p. 142.
22. John, son of Thomas and Mary Doughty, was born October 14, 1752, and James, son of Thomas and Mary Doughty, was born November 25, 1753; *Register of St. Philip's, 1720-1758*, pp. 99, 100. There is a record of a burial of a child James Doughty in July 1754 and another child James Doughty in December 1755; probably one of these was John. *Ibid.*, 1754-1810, pp.277 and 280.
23. *Register of St. Philip's, 1754-1810*, pp. 281, 286, 293, records burial of a Cannon child, unnamed, in May of 1756, December of 1757, and February of 1760. A son *John* was born on April 2, 1758; a son *Daniel* was baptized on 19 May 1758; Daniel Cannon's *son* was buried February 11, 1763; these were probably all the same son. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 36, 311.
24. *Thomas Elfe's Account Book* (S.C. Historical Society Ms. 51-49) lists several sales to "Cannon & Doughty," the first one dated 6 July 1771, p. 36.
25. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 25 March 1766.
26. SCHGM, Vol. 19, pp. 72-73.
27. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 22 Nov. 1768. The manager wanted must be capable of "tending the Market"; this sounds like what today would be called a truck farm.
28. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1767.
29. Charleston County *Land Records Misc.* (transcript), Pt. 37, Book H3, pp. 382-388, 22 Feb. 1768; Pt. 35, Book F3, p. 111, 8 Aug. 1766.
30. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 3 Nov. 1767. *South Carolina Gazette*, 12 Oct. 1765.

31. Charleston County *Land Records Misc.* (transcript), Pt. 67, Book H5, pp. 350-354, 1 Nov. 1779. His five partners were Thomas Ferguson, planter; Charles Elliott, planter; John Marley, tanner; Moses Kirkland, millwright; and John Ward, merchant.
32. *SCHGM*, Vol. 74, pp. 206-207.
33. *Elfe Account Book*, pp. 36, 64, others. The first work was purchased on November 6, 1772.
34. Charleston County *Land Records Misc.* (transcript), Pt. 52, Book K4, pp. 306-319.
35. George C. Rogers, Jr., ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, Vol. 4, p. 261n.
36. Richard Walsh, *Charleston's Sons of Liberty* (University of S.C. Press, 1949), p. 42.
37. S.C. Court of Common Pleas *Judgment Rolls*, Box 79A, No. 334A, for example; in 1768 Cannon sued Benjamin Perry, planter, for a debt of £220 owed since 1755, and recovered with damages. Charles Pinckney was his attorney on this and several other occasions.
38. Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, p. 29. Charleston County *Wills, etc.* (transcript), Vol. 86A, p. 292.
39. Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, pp. 134-138.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 50. George C. Rogers, Jr., "The Charleston Tea Party: The Significance of December 3, 1773," *SCHGM*, Vol. 75, p. 161.
42. Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, p. 53.
43. Rogers, "Charleston Tea Party," p. 159.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 161; Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, p. 64.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 75. The Papers of the Second Council of Safety, published in *SCHGM*, Vol. IV, pp. 15-20, contain several accounts paid to Daniel Cannon in 1775.
46. N. Louise Bailey and Elizabeth Ivey Cooper, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives, Vol. III, 1775-1790*, p. 125; *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, 5 May 1777.
47. Letter to the author dated 3 May 1982 from Kenneth Jones, Curator of Decorative Arts, the Charleston Museum.
48. Bailey and Cooper, *Biographical Directory*, p. 125.
49. The records of St. Philips show that Cannon's grandson, Daniel Cannon Webb, was "baptized privately" on August 2, 1782; his granddaughter, Henrietta Cannon Webb, was buried on September 2, 1782; and his daughter, Mary Webb, the mother of these two children, was buried on October 24, 1782. All of these entries occur *after* the Cannon, Doughty and Webb families were banished from Charleston in April, 1782, leading to the conclusion that they were living not far from the city during their exile. Also during 1782 Daniel Cannon, Thomas Doughty and John Webb acted as executors of the estate of William Trusler, Mary's brother, a former patriot turned loyalist, who was shot by rebels during a wartime incident (Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, p. 50n; Charleston County *Letters of Administration*, Vol. 00, p. 166). This situation serves as an illustration of the tensions which must have troubled many families during the war, and proves

that family ties remained strong within the Cannon-Doughty group in spite of divided political allegiance.

50. *SCHG*, Vol. 17, p. 8. The long list of rebels ordered out of Charleston included Daniel Cannon, John Webb (married to Cannon's daughter Mary), Thomas Doughty, and their families. Another son-in-law, James Wakefield, was a militia officer who had been deported to St. Augustine in 1780; he, with his wife Sarah Cannon and their seven children, later spent about a year in exile in Philadelphia.
51. Charleston County *Land Records, Misc.*, Pt. 101, Bk. C8, pp. 205-212.
52. Charleston County *Inventories*, Vol. D, 1800-1810, p. 197, 8 March 1803.
53. Charleston County *Land Records, Misc.*, Pt. 87, Book R6, p. 43; Pt. 86, Book Q6, p. 210; Pt. 101, Book C8, p. 243; Pt. 87, Book R6, p. 456; Pt. 86, Book Q6, p. 214.
54. *Carolina Gazette*, Charleston, 24 October 1799.
55. *Charleston City Gazette*, 1 March 1792 and 16 April 1792.
56. Walsh, *Sons of Liberty*, Chapter V, "Results of Revolution."
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.
58. Bailey and Cooper, *Biographical Directory*, p. 125.
59. Charleston County *Wills* (transcript), Vol. 24, p. 123.

*The author wishes to express a special debt of gratitude to Miss Katherine Anderson and Mrs. Alice Yates of Charleston, who very generously shared material on Daniel Cannon which they have gathered over many years of research.*

## APPENDIX

Charleston County, S.C. *Inventories, Vol. D. 1800-1810*, p. 197, 8 March 1803: "Inventory and appraisement of all the Goods & Chattels of *Daniel Cannon* Esqr. deceased of Charleston as were shown to us appointed to appraise the same by Miss Martha Cannon, Executrix."

Household Furniture—7 Mahogany Dining Tables . . . . .	\$ 35.
2 do end Tables \$6 — 3 do Tea Tables \$5 — 2 do Writing	
Desks with drawers \$30 — 1 do Writing Desk \$4 . . . . .	45.
19 do Chairs \$20 — 2 do Sophas \$50 — 1 do Cellerett \$25 . . . . .	95.
4 do Chest of Drawers \$50 — 9 do Bedsteads \$40 — . . . . .	90.
1 do Portable Book Case \$3 — 1 do Stand \$1.50/100 —	
1 ditto Dressing Table \$1.50/100 — 1 do Bed Chair \$3 —	
1 Clock \$20 . . . . .	29.
1 Cedar Writing Desk with Drawers \$3 — 24 Windsor	
Chairs \$24 — 20 Straw bottomed Hickory Ditto \$15 — . . . . .	42.
5 Chests & 5 Trunks \$10 — 2 large Liquor Cases \$10 —	
Lot of Knives & forks & knife case \$5 —	
Lot of Japanned Waiters & bottle Stands \$3 —	
Lot of Candlesticks & Snuffers \$4 . . . . .	32.

Lot of fire Dogs, fenders, shovels & Tongs \$20 —  
 Lot of Crockery & Glass Ware \$30 —  
 1 Trunk Table Linen \$40 ..... 90.  
 1 do Bed Linen \$35 — Lot of Bedding, consisting of  
 three feather Beds, 6 mattresses, 12 Pillows  
 & Bolsters & 8 pair Blankets \$175 —  
 2 Scotch Carpets & 4 bedside do \$15 ..... 225.  
 Lot of Books \$10 — 3 Pictures, Washington Family,  
 Columbus & Liberty, \$12 — Lot of Plate weigh<sup>g</sup>  
 230 Ounces @ \$1. pr Ou, \$230 —  
 Kitchen furniture — Lot of Kitchen Furniture \$20 —  
 2 riding chairs 1 @ \$70 — the other very old \$20 — \$90 —  
 1 Chaise with 2 Wheels & Top, old and much used \$60 —  
 2 Carts old and much used \$20 ..... 442.  
 3 Horses \$150 — 3 Cows & 1 Bull \$30 —  
 lot of about 66,000 feet ranging timber @ \$35 pm. \$2310 —  
 Lot of about 8000 feet sawed Lumber including Slabs &  
 refuse @ \$30 — \$260 ..... 2650.  
 Lot of Blacksmith's Tools \$20 — Lot of Carpenters do \$10 . 30.  
 List of Negroes — Old Beck \$100 — Dinah & 2 children \$700. 800.  
 Beck & 3 Children \$1000. — Luce \$150 —  
 Venus & 3 Children \$1200 — Nancy & Child \$600 —  
 Luna \$500 — Caty & 4 Children \$1200 — Chloe \$50 —  
 Long Harry Carpenter \$100. .... 4800.  
 Old Harry do (incumbrance) O/. John do \$500 ..... 500.  
 Pearce do \$800 — Tom do \$800 — Scipio, Taylor \$600 ... 2200.  
 Robin, Bricklayer \$800 — Little John, House Servant \$500 . 1300.  
 Nero, Mill hand \$700 — Cuffy do \$700 — Jersey do \$400 . 1800.  
 Jack do — \$600 Little Cesar do \$600 — (?) (?) do \$550 .... 1750.  
 Dick do \$550 — Ben, House Servant \$600 —  
 Abel, Gardener \$50 — Tony do \$100 — Andrew \$100 —  
 Boston \$300 ..... 1700.  
 Three negroes at Mrs. Hopson Pinckney's St. Thomas's Parish —  
 one a Wench capable of doing a Task — the second a fellow very old  
 & infirm & the third another fellow, very old  
 and infirm, but particularly so from a long and  
 incurable illness ..... 400.  
 Charleston March 8th 1803 ..... \$19,055.  
 The foregoing is the Appraisement made by us Amounting to  
 Nineteen Thousand & fifty five Dollars —  
 Keating Thomas — William Clarkson — Edward Weyman

(Note: The inventory of Cannon's personal property also included a long list of debts owed him and bonds held at the time of his death. Real estate was not inventoried, but advertised for sale in December 1803 as *part* of his property were two complete tidal saw mills, each accompanied by no less than 80 acres of marsh and two acres of high land; 15 to 20 lots, apparently in Cannonsboro; 10,000 acres of pine land on the Edisto River; about 30 negroes, among them valuable carpenters, mill hands, a bricklayer and a tailor; and a pew in Saint Philip's Church.)



*Figure 1. Footed bowl, 1807-1812, marked "J. GAITHER." HOA  $4\frac{1}{4}$ , Diameter  $10\frac{1}{8}$ . MESDA accession 3465.*

## *John Gaither, Silversmith*

CATHERINE B. HOLLAN

A recent addition to the MESDA collection is a ten-inch silver bowl, which, with a weight of over forty-two ounces, is the largest southern footed bowl recorded to date (Fig. 1). Having an Alexandria, Virginia history, the bowl descended in the Marsteller family. It is marked "J. GAITHER" (Fig. 2) in a hatched rectangle for John Gaither, a silversmith whose working career in Alexandria and Washington spanned but ten years, from 1807 to 1817. Gaither was the son of Zachariah and Sarah Gaither, and was born in Queen Caroline Parish, Anne Arundel County, Maryland in the mid-1780's.

John Gaither was an eighth generation descendant of the first members of the family to settle in the colonies. John "Gater" (1599-166?) arrived in Virginia from England in 1620, establishing himself at Jamestown. His son, John Gaither, Jr. (1620-1652), heeding Lord Baltimore's assurances of religious freedom in the neighboring colony of Maryland, settled in the area between the Severn and South Rivers near what was later to become Annapolis. In this 1649/50 emigration, all of the Gaithers appear to have left Virginia, since the name does not occur there after that time.<sup>1</sup>

The family prospered in Maryland. A third generation son, Captain John Gaither (1646-1702) and his wife Ruth acquired a considerable quantity of land, including an 875-acre plantation on the South River called Abington which was to become the seat of the senior branch of the Gaither family for many decades following.<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Gaither (1682-1741), the son of Captain John Gaither, established himself on the Patuxent River in Anne Arundel County and organized a Chapel of Ease that

later became the nucleus for Queen Caroline Parish.<sup>3</sup> Benjamin and Sarah Burgess Gaither's second son, John (1713-1784), inherited his father's 700-acre plantation which had been given the strange appellation "Bite the Biter."<sup>4</sup> John and Agnes Rogers Gaither's second son, Zachariah (1747-1802), fell heir to the same estate, and like his father and grandfather before him was noted as a "planter" and "gentleman" in Maryland records.<sup>5</sup>



*Figure 2. The touchmark struck twice on the outside of the foot ring of the bowl in Fig. 1; the die was diagonally hatched with a "V" burin to provide a raised texture to the stamped ground.*

As a bachelor Zachariah had served active duty in the American Revolution. In 1776 he signed a petition to join a company of militia, furnishing his own equipment. Commissioned 30 March 1779, he served as Ensign in Captain Basil Burgess' Company, Elk Ridge Battalion, Anne Arundel County.<sup>6</sup> Zachariah married Sarah Riggs Warfield, the daughter of Edward and Rachel Warfield, on 29 August 1781 in Queen Caroline Parish. They had eight children, recorded in the Warfield family Bible as Zachariah Jr., Lucy, John, James, Edward, Greenberry, Evan and Rachel.<sup>7</sup> Birth dates are known for only two of the children — Zachariah Jr., born 3 April 1782, and Greenberry, 3 December 1792 — which bracket John's birth.<sup>8</sup> John's birth date must be guessed to have fallen between 1784 and 1788. John, like his brother Zachariah, was born at the family plantation.<sup>9</sup>

The family lived in Queen Caroline Parish for a time, then moved west to Montgomery County prior to 9 February 1793, when the records of Prince George Parish in that county list the baptism of son Greenberry.<sup>10</sup> Many other Gaithers had also moved to Montgomery County; the town of Gaithersburg is named for the family. Zachariah died intestate in 1802; his widow returned to Elk Ridge in Anne Arundel County and administered the estate from there.<sup>11</sup> An inventory with an appraised value of \$765.79, including nine slaves, was filed in 1807 and final distribution was made 9 October 1810, giving £20:02:10 Maryland currency to each child.<sup>12</sup>



The oldest of the children, Zachariah Jr., was just twenty when his father died, but he remained in Montgomery County where he married in 1805, settling in Hagerstown, Maryland, near his wife's family.<sup>13</sup> Presumably the other children returned to Elk Ridge with their mother. Land records indicate that the children later resided in Anne Arundel and nearby Howard Counties. The two children who became silversmiths — John and his younger brother Greenberry<sup>14</sup> — both eventually made their way to the District of Columbia, part of which had been carved out of Montgomery County in 1800.

Unfortunately, no apprenticeship records have been found that record where or how either brother learned silversmithing; there were many artisans following that trade in nearby Baltimore and in the towns of Georgetown and Alexandria (both part of the District of Columbia at that time). John Gaither's apprenticeship would have fallen between the years 1798-1800 to approximately 1807. In that year, we find Gaither as a working adult; he was probably just turning twenty-one when he began to work as a silversmith in partnership with Greenberry Griffith in Alexandria.<sup>15</sup> Griffith and John Gaither were second cousins; Greenberry's paternal grandmother, Ruth Riggs Griffith, was a sister of Rachel Riggs Warfield, Gaither's maternal grandmother.<sup>16</sup> When Greenberry Griffith was fifteen, his father, Howard Griffith of Montgomery County, had formally apprenticed him to George W. Riggs (who was also a relative — Riggs' father, Samuel, was the brother of Rachel and Ruth)<sup>17</sup> to learn "silversmithing, clock and watch making in the various branches as far as George W. Riggs now followest and practices." Griffith apprenticed at Riggs' shop in Georgetown from 1802 until 20 May 1807, the date upon which he became twenty-one.<sup>18</sup>

The partnership was first noted in the Alexandria city tax assessments for 1807 as "John Gater" and Greenberry Griffith, a retail store in a single-story building.<sup>19</sup> Two years later the partners bought Jacob Gregg's stock and materials and announced themselves as "Greenberry Griffith & John Gaither," clock and watch-makers and silversmiths at the corner of Fairfax and Prince Streets. The firm was

. . . prepared to execute all orders in their line with neatness and dispatch. They have on hand and intend keeping a general assortment of Gold and Silver Watches, warranted, SILVER WARE AND FANCY ARTICLES, &c

and respectfully solicit a portion of public patronage, which they will endeavor to merit by a steady attention to business and a faithful and neat execution of their work.<sup>20</sup>

Jacob Gregg ran a separate advertisement that he had disposed of his stock to the young partners and recommended them "to his friends as his successors and solicits a continuance of their custom." Griffith was authorized as his agent to receive outstanding accounts. Although dated 4 April, the first notice was published 11 April 1809 in the *Alexandria Daily Gazette*. The partnership was listed in the 1810 city census as "Gaytor & Griffith," watchmakers, having in their establishment three white males over the age of sixteen and two colored females, one under sixteen.<sup>21</sup> The 1810 city tax assessments reversed the names, listing "Griffith & Gaiter" with four male tithables in a single-story building as retail merchants.<sup>22</sup>

For a few years, John Gaither advertised from the same address as if he were an individual proprietor. On 31 March 1810 he advertised "a small invoice of jewelry consisting of Ladies' Ear-Rings, Bracelets, Necklaces &c of new and elegant patterns. Also a general assortment of Silver Ware, as usual, all of which will be sold very cheap."<sup>23</sup> He also listed a new item, hair-work. Again on 5 October 1811 he advertised alone:

JOHN GAITHER,  
Corner of Prince and Fairfax Streets,  
Has just received from Philadelphia, New Ark [Newark,  
N.J.], and New York, a handsome assortment of Pearl,  
Topaz and Cornelian Jewellery, Watch Chains, Seals, Keys.  
Also a handsome assortment of Silver Plate and Plated  
Ware, which will be sold at a reduced price.<sup>24</sup>

The 1812 tax assessments, however, continued to list the partnership as "Gaither & Griffith, retail merchants" at the corner of Fairfax and Prince streets, though showing only two male tithables. In the same year John Gaither, who had married in 1811, was also listed as the occupant of a house and lot owned by Thomas Preston.<sup>25</sup> Gaither had married Margaret Carew of Alexandria 3 March 1811, the Reverend Francis Barclay of Christ Church performing the ceremony.<sup>26</sup>

Variations in the order of partnership names between Gaither & Griffith and Griffith & Gaither is puzzling and may indicate

a casual business arrangement. The order of names in a partnership was generally fixed, the first name reflecting seniority or controlling investor. Tax and census records usually cited Gaither first, and he advertised alone after the initial notice of taking over Gregg's shop, suggesting that Gaither may have been the more active partner. Unfortunately, no silver bearing the marks of both men has been found. In any event, the partnership disbanded in 1812. On 11 May of that year William A. Williams, a gold and silversmith who had completed his apprenticeship in Baltimore in 1807, advertised that he had taken over the shop lately occupied by "Messrs. Gaither & Griffith," at the corner of Prince and Fairfax Streets.<sup>27</sup> Griffith, however, did not move, but instead made a cooperative arrangement with Williams. Shortly after this, Williams revised his notice to say he was taking over the shop lately occupied by "Mr. Gaither" and Greenberry Griffith appended a notice that he would continue the watch and clock business at his old stand; this arrangement evidently was no more than a sharing of premises between Griffith and Williams.<sup>28</sup>

John Gaither moved across the Potomac River to Washington and advertised in the *National Intelligencer* for 30 May 1812 that he had moved from Alexandria and had opened a shop near the Center Market

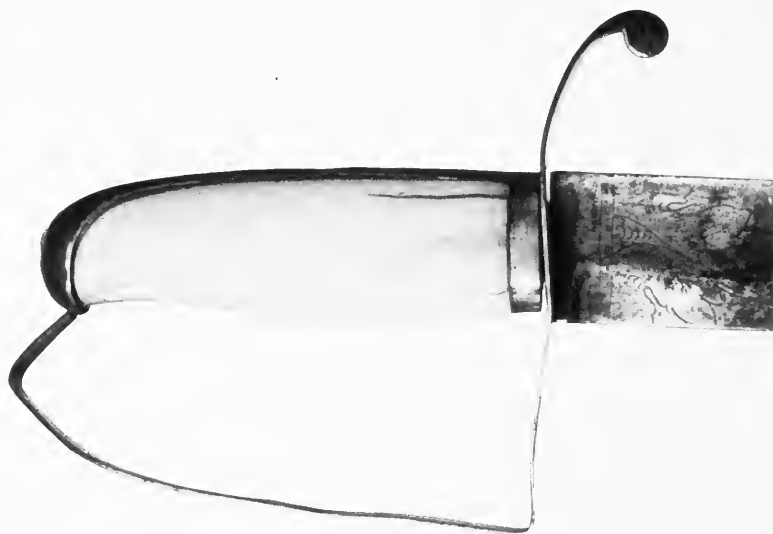
. . . with a variety of SILVER WARE, PLATED WARE  
AND JEWELRY CONSISTING OF THE FOLLOWING  
ARTICLES:

Complete sets of plate,  
Candlesticks, Snuffets, Trays & Casters,  
Gold watch Chains, Seals & Keys,  
Pearl, Topaz and Cornelian Breast Pins and Ear Rings,  
Cornelian and Coral Necklaces,  
Gilt Watch Chains, Keys and Seals, &c

Also a variety of Whips and Canes, Silver Work and  
jewellery made to any pattern at the shortest notice.  
Watches and Clocks repaired in the best manner.<sup>29</sup>

Gaither continued advertising from his Washington location from 1812 through 1817. During the War of 1812 his notices sought military patronage. On 6 April 1813 he advertised a new shipment of "a few handsome SILVER MOUNTED SWORDS"<sup>30</sup> and on 23 June offered further military goods: ". . . just received from New York a handsome assortment of SILVER AND PLATED

EPAULETS, SWORDS, SWORD & DIRK BELTS, RED PLUMES, WHITE DO WITH RED . . .”<sup>31</sup> During the War of 1812 the regular infantry expanded to some 30,000 men from a mere 500 troops following the American Revolution. Since officers provided their own swords, local silversmiths aggressively solicited their patronage. Silver hilted swords and sabres were regulation for all military and naval officers, and were also worn by officers of state.<sup>32</sup>



*Figure 3. Officer's sabre, 1812-15, with silver backstrap, ferrule, and knuckle-bow, the latter marked inside "J. GAITHER;" grip of ivory. The bow, originally of reverse "P" form, has been bent flat. The French blade, etched with floral and patriotic designs, was originally accented with gold and temper-blued; with a silver-mounted leather scabbard (not illustrated). LOA 33, blade length 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ . Private collection. Patrick M. Duggan photograph.*

One such sabre (Fig. 3) by Gaither is a fairly plain piece, in keeping with the rank of a lieutenant. The sabre is ivory-gripped, with a convex backstrap terminating in a simple "bird-head" pommel, unlike the more detailed eagle-head pommels common on Baltimore officers' sabres of the period. The knuckle-bow is of the reverse "P" type and the scabbard is black leather with silver mounts. "J. GAITHER" in a rectangle is marked on the inside of the knuckle-bow, and "C + I + Queen Lt 36th Inf." is scratched on the same part, as well as twice on the scabbard throat. Queen, whose family owned land north of Washington in Maryland, was in the 36th Regiment for fifteen months during 1814 and 1815.<sup>33</sup>

During that time this regiment was engaged at the Battle of Bladensburg and then marched to Fort McHenry in Baltimore in time for the famous bombardment which is said to have inspired Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner." The sword is thus presumed to date about 1814.

After peace was declared, Gaither's advertising emphasis returned to jewelry and watches. Although he advertised making silver and jewelry to any pattern at the shortest notice, he also retailed many ready-made items, especially watches and jewelry. Gaither often advertised that he had received goods from other cities including Philadelphia, New York, and Newark, as well as the English cities of London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Sheffield.<sup>34</sup> Gaither had large accounts with New York manufacturers Thomas and Benjamin Demitt, who themselves had accounts with the Newark, New Jersey jewelry manufacturer Ephphras Hinsdale & Co.<sup>35</sup> The Philadelphia silversmith Samuel Williamson occasionally supplied specific silver orders to Alexandria and Georgetown silversmiths during the period. One such instance in Williamson's account books for the period 1806 to 1812 is a single entry debiting John Gaither for one "pair of goblets light"; the entry was made 16 October 1812.<sup>36</sup>

As early as January, 1817, Gaither began making reference to closing his business. Declining health and a growing number of unpaid accounts were wearing on him. On 9 January he listed several items which would be sold ". . . very low for cash, as he is desirous of closing his business this winter. All persons indebted to him will please call and settle their accounts."<sup>37</sup> In May of that year he offered his goods at ". . . wholesale or retail, at a small advance for cash, or good paper at 60 and 90 days. Wishing to evade the unpleasant sensation of dunning, no goods will be sold on credit but to those who have heretofore been punctual in their engagements."<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, he was still advertising "all kinds of gold and silver work made at the shortest notice" and he was still receiving shipments such as the "few pair of Gold, Silver, and Gilt Epauletts, various patterns with Counter Straps to match" advertised 21 January; on 29 May he described an extensive assortment of fancy goods imported from Birmingham and Sheffield which rendered "his assortment very complete."<sup>39</sup> Perhaps this last shipment was intended to put his stock into a more advantageous position for selling the business, for within a few months Gaither had retired.

On 2 December 1817 Jacob Leonard advertised in the *Daily National Intelligencer* that he had “. . . purchased from Mr. John Gaither all his stock in trade, and now offers them for sale, (with the addition of his own stock from Georgetown) at the house lately occupied by Mr. Gaither a few doors east of Davis’ Hotel, Pennsylvania Avenue.”<sup>40</sup> Although he sold the stock, District of Columbia *Land Records* make it clear that Gaither continued to occupy this three-story brick building as his residence.<sup>41</sup>

Gaither had mixed financial success, perhaps complicated by a tendency to overdraw credit needed to expand shop goods, which in turn was purchased by a clientele slow in paying its accounts to him. In June, 1815, Gaither and Patrick Rogers — a saddler who among other things sold buggy whips to silversmiths for fancy fittings — bought a business property on Pennsylvania Avenue from John P. Van Ness, Lot 6 in Square 491 on the city plan. Fronting 38 feet 8 inches on the north side of the avenue, and a few doors east of 6th Street, the property served as both shop and residence for Gaither. Gaither took the east half of the lot and Rogers the west half. Gaither’s half cost \$2869 and principle and interest were to be paid in three installments, the last payment due 21 June 1817.<sup>42</sup> Gaither borrowed against the property many times, using it to secure the loans. In August, 1817, he borrowed a total of \$4400.44 from the banker Elisha Riggs of Georgetown.<sup>43</sup> In May, 1818, the property was again used for security in discounted notes evidently endorsed by Patrick Rogers; Gaither apparently expected to renew these notes from time to time.<sup>44</sup> In October, 1818, Gaither gave a bond to Georgetown silversmith Charles E. Eckel and New York City manufacturing jewelers Thomas and Benjamin Demitt for \$2000, of which \$938.87 plus interest was to be paid by 6 January 1820; this transaction was witnessed by Henry A. Leonard and Cherubim Dufief, both silversmiths in Georgetown. This contact between several silversmiths almost a year after Gaither had sold his stock is interesting, though difficult to explain. Had Gaither retired from shopkeeping to supply retail goods to fellow silversmiths? On the day this loan was made, a deed of trust was executed by Gaither and his wife Margaret, listing their property (Lot 6) as collateral to Eckel and the Demitts.<sup>45</sup>

Gaither’s financial affairs continued a downward trend. In March, 1819, he assigned to his brother Edward of Anne Arundel County his portion of the family plantation which he had inherited from his father’s estate.<sup>46</sup> The following month Gaither

recorded a formal bill of sale in the District of Columbia court for all his household furniture to settle a debt of \$813.12 ½ owed to Greenberry Gaither, presumably his brother, who was working in Washington as a silversmith.<sup>47</sup> Charles E. Eckel and John's brother Edward Gaither witnessed the transaction. On the same date, 6 April, John recorded a bill of sale to Charles E. Eckel to close a debt of \$565 which he had been unable to pay. Included in the schedule of small household goods were

8 tablespoons @ 2.75, 6 marked TMC \$22, 11 old teaspoons \$6, 6 new teaspoons marked G \$4, 6 dessert spoons marked G \$11, 2 salt spoons \$1, 2 mustard spoons \$1.25, 1 pair tea tongs marked TMC 2.50, 1 cream pot \$12, 1 plated castor \$12, 1 Japaned ditto 3.50, 1 pair glass salts 3.00, 1 urn plated £13, 6 silver tumblers @ \$6 \$36, 1 time piece \$20, 1 pair plated candlesticks \$4, 1 pair ditto \$2, 3 mantle ornaments @1 \$3 . . . dozen plates Liverpoolware . . . 1 yellor girl Carolina between 6 and 7 years to serve til 20 years of age \$75 . . .<sup>48</sup>

In February, 1816, John had inherited two slaves from his father's sisters, Mary and Sally Gaither, for whom he had acted as administrator, and John's wife Margaret had inherited the negro Carolina, who had been valued at \$120 six months earlier.<sup>49</sup> Evidently only Margaret's slaves remained at this time. It is possible that the six silver tablespoons and tea tongs marked "TMC" were part of the Carew family silver.<sup>50</sup> This sale of personal items to Eckel was witnessed by John's brothers, James and Edward Gaither.

Two months later, on 14 June 1819, the *City of Washington Gazette* carried Gaither's obituary:

Died, on Thursday last at the house of his mother Sarah Gaither, Elk Ridge, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Mr. John Gaither, silversmith, a respectable and industrious resident of this city. He had a long struggle with a pulmonary complaint which he endeavored to removed [sic] by a West India voyage, but only temporary relief was experienced.<sup>51</sup>

Gaither had not settled all his debts, particularly the notes endorsed by Patrick Rogers, who consequently had to pay \$300

for one note; others totalling \$6520 remained.<sup>52</sup> A public notice of 2 September 1819 was issued, stating that Gaither's security for those notes — Lot 6 on Pennsylvania Avenue — would be sold at auction 23 October by the trustee, Richard Wallach.<sup>53</sup> Land records for 9 August 1821 contain the deed transferred to Rogers, who was highest bidder at \$5300.<sup>54</sup>



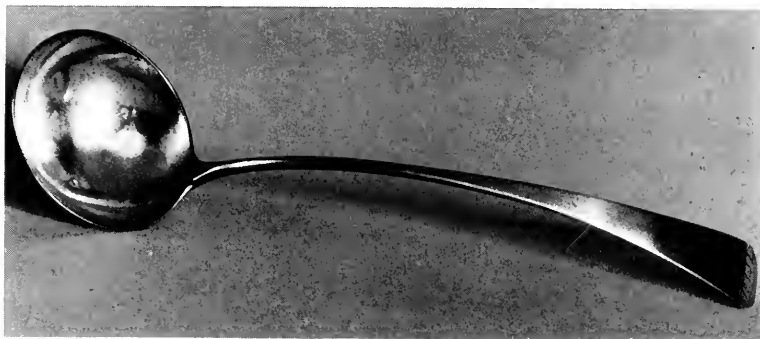
*Figure 4. Spoon, 1807-1812, marked 'J. GAITHER.' LOA 7. MESDA research file S-7731.*

John Gaither's work is generally conservative in style, and often appears surprisingly earlier than his working dates would seem to indicate. Most of the known flatware has a simple early nineteenth century style with a slender stem, the handle gently flaring to a rounded end which is turned down (Fig. 4). Gaither advertised silver made to any pattern, and although he worked only ten years, three flatware handle patterns have been found: rounded, "coffin"-end, and an early "fiddle" shape without a shoulder. The "coffin"-end, a style popularly thought to have been introduced after the death of President Washington, was in vogue during the 1800-1815 period. Examples by other Alexandria silversmiths such as William A. Williams, John Adam, and John Pittman, are known. Gaither "coffin"-ends are known in teaspoons, tablespoons, and a large soup ladle. One such ladle illustrated here, though with the earlier round-top handle, is a particularly fine example of Gaither's skill, showing beautiful balance, a high arch, and a deep circular bowl (Fig. 5).

The "fiddle" pattern was beginning to emerge during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and a few examples are found with Gaither's mark, though only with the early transitional form of straight-sided, narrow "fiddle" with no shoulder at the bowl. The spoons are all undecorated, bearing at most a monogram at the top of the handle. Two pairs of sugar tongs are known (Fig. 6), both in the "fiddle" style with well-defined shoulders, plain die-formed acorn tips, bright-cut borders, and



a simple cartouche on the bends. One pair is 6½ inches long, the other 5⅞ inches. All the flatware is marked with the "J. GAITHER" intaglio die, the face of which had been diagonally hatched with a burin to provide a textured background in the mark as it appeared on silver.

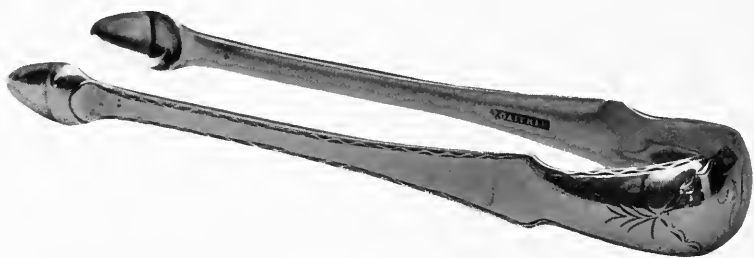


*Figure 5. Ladle, 1807-12, marked "J. GAITHER" twice. Dimensions not recorded. MESDA research file S-9506.*

Only five pieces of Gaither holloware are known: the sword hilt described earlier, two bowls, and two beakers. The earliest piece is unquestionably the Marsteller bowl now owned by MESDA. This bowl has a confident simplicity, its ornamentation so subtle that it is almost missed: a wriggle-work border below the rim cut with a notched burin; the same unusual border was also used on the inside edge of the rim. The notched burin sinuous "double" wriggle repeats at the base of the heavy foot ring and again as a straight line where the foot joins the bowl. The bowl is said to have been owned by Colonel Phillip Marsteller (1741-1804), who commanded a regiment of the Pennsylvania Line during the Revolutionary War. Coming to Alexandria after the war, he was mayor of the city from 1790 to 1792, and one of Washington's pallbearers.<sup>55</sup> Marsteller died, however, before Gaither was spoken free of his indenture. The bowl was probably ordered by his son Philip G. Marsteller (1770-1842), who continued his father's auction and commission business. Though the bowl bears no crest or monogram to verify this, it has descended in the family to the present day.

The lack of published information about Gaither has clouded the provenance of two other Gaither pieces. One is a beaker in the White House collection marked "J. GAITHER" with the maker's usual hatched die (Fig. 7). This beaker represents the

popular style of the time; it is relatively straight-sided with applied edge molding at the lip and base. "J.D.McGuire" is engraved in script on the side for the owner, a collector of presidential materials who believed that this beaker had been owned by George Washington. In 1931 the beaker was presented by a descendant of McGuire to the White House with an inscription added on the bottom "Cup owned by President Washington bequeathed to the White House by J.D.McGuire." A "W" is also engraved on the bottom.<sup>56</sup> An identical beaker with the inscription "B.M.McGuire" on the side is privately owned and was illustrated in the 1966 Corcoran Gallery of Art exhibition "A Century of Silver."<sup>57</sup> Possibly owned by Washington descendants, perhaps even used at Mount Vernon, neither of these beakers could have been made for President Washington since Gaither was probably just beginning his apprenticeship when Washington died. The Washington attribution is dubious apart from Gaither's working dates, since known Washington silver does not bear a large script "W," especially on the bottom, but rather displays the Washington or Custis crest in a prominent position.<sup>58</sup>



*Figure 6. Sugar tongs, 1807-1815, marked "J. GAITHER." LOA 6½. MESDA accession 1121-2.*

Abruptly contrasting with the simplicity of the Marsteller bowl is a sugar bowl in the fully-developed Empire style (Fig. 8). Standing nine inches high, the lower half has a melon-like lobed body on a round pedestal base. Grape leaf decorated bands are applied at the base and below the rim, and gadrooning at the rim. Such elaborate elements were often purchased from large firms equipped with the expensive rolls needed to impress the designs. The lid has cove and ovolo moldings under a swelling melon-lobe top, a form also seen in Baltimore during the same period. Although distinctive, the acanthus-decorated cast handles



*Figure 7. Beaker, 1807-1817, marked "J. GAITHER." HOA  $3\frac{3}{8}$ , diameter at rim  $2\frac{1}{8}$ . White House Collection, Washington, D.C.*

are a pattern also seen on a kylix-shaped sauceboat by Charles A. Burnett exhibited in the 1968 Southern Silver show in Houston.<sup>99</sup> The abrupt change from conservative early Neoclassical form to exuberant Empire style and decoration suggests that this was a piece retailed by Gaither and made in the latest taste by a major manufacturer such as Samuel Williamson or Fletcher and Gardiner in Philadelphia, or even one of the Baltimore firms. The sugar bowl bears the maker mark "I.GAITHER" in a rectangle (Fig. 9), perhaps added by the manufacturer before sending it to Gaither's shop. The "I.GAITHER" mark has been found on only one other piece — a dessert spoon of the

shoulderless “fiddle” pattern, undecorated except for the monogram “AJH.”<sup>60</sup> So far, this mark has not been found on the earlier style silver, but only on pieces which are stylistically later, including fiddle pattern flatware and Empire style holloware.



*Figure 8. Sugar bowl, 1812-17, marked “I GAITHER.” HOA 9. MESDA research file S-7730.*



*Figure 9. The touchmark used on the sugar bowl in Fig. 9.*

*Ms. Hollan is Computational Linguist for the U.S. Patent Office and has long held an interest in researching silversmiths of the Maryland, Virginia, and District of Columbia area, with particular emphasis on Alexandria, where she is compiling data on clockmakers and silversmiths prior to 1830.*

## FOOTNOTES

1. Harry Wright Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry*, Vol. 1 (Annapolis, Md.: private printing, Revised Edition 1970), pp. 59-60. Newman notes that the father may have remained behind, but if there were any other brothers left in Virginia, they died without issue.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63, the author cites Land Office Liber 5,578-9.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-94.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-97.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 104, and Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records: Colonial, Revolutionary, and Church from Original Sources*, Vol. 2 (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Press Inc., 1928), p. 345.
7. Newman, *Anne Arundel*, Rev. Ed. p. 104.
8. The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, application number 436041, cites the genealogy of Zachariah Gaither through his son Zachariah Junior; see Newman, *Anne Arundel*, p. 104 for Greenberry Gaither.
9. Newman, *Anne Arundel*, Rev. Ed., pp. 125,126.
10. Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records*, p. 542, citing Prince George Parish, Montgomery County, Maryland, *Register of Baptisms 1792-1845*.
11. Newman, in the first edition of *Anne Arundel Gentry* (Baltimore: Lord Baltimore Press, 1933), p. 372 states that Zachariah died in Montgomery County; in the revised edition of the same work (p. 104) he lists Anne Arundel County as the place of death. For administration papers completed by his widow Sarah, see Anne Arundel County, Maryland, *Testamentary Papers*, Box 54, folder 36, dated 1802.
12. Newman, *Anne Arundel*, Rev. Ed., p. 104, and inventory in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, *Accounts Book JG5:41* and final distribution in *Testamentary Papers*, Box 96, folders 55 and 76.
13. NSDAR application 436041.
14. Greenberry Gaither worked as a silversmith in Washington, D.C. from 1818 to 1838, when he died. He used the mark "G. GAITHER" in a rectangle and perhaps a Roman lettered "GG"; Greenberry Griffith used a script "GG" and may have used Roman lettering as well.
15. The coincidence of the name Greenberry (spelled Greenberry or Greenbury) in both the Griffith and Gaither families, while unusual today, was not uncommon in eighteenth century Maryland. The namesake, Col. Nicholas Greenberry, was a prominent figure in the founding of the province and held many state offices including Colonel in the provincial militia.

President of the Governing Council, and, in 1693/4, Acting Governor. His only son, Col. Charles Greenberry, died without issue and the name became extinct as a surname; however, Nicholas' three daughters carried the names "Greenberry" and "Charles Greenberry" into the Ridgely, Hammond, Griffith, Gaither, and Dorsey families as an honored Christian name.

16. John Hawkins Wallace, *Genealogy of the Riggs Family* (New York: John Hawkins Wallace, 1901, reprint 1970), pp. 114-5 for Riggs genealogy; NSDAR No. 132167 for the Griffith line; and Newman, *Anne Arundel*, Rev. Ed., p. 359 for the Gaither/Riggs connection.
17. Wallace, *Riggs Family*, pp. 114-5.
18. District of Columbia, *Apprenticeships*, JH1:28 (dated 17 March 1802, filed 19 April).
19. Alexandria, District of Columbia, *Tax Assessments*, 1807.
20. *Alexandria Daily Gazette*, 11 April 1809 (dated 4 April), hereinafter cited as ADG.
21. Alexandria, District of Columbia, [City] *Census*, 1810, First Ward.
22. Alexandria, *Tax Assessments*, 1810.
23. ADG, 31 March 1810.
24. *Ibid.*, 5 Oct. 1811.
25. Alexandria, *Tax Assessments*, 1812.
26. ADG, 3 March 1811, and Alexandria County, *District of Columbia Marriage Register 1803-1879*, entry for 3 March 1811. When John and Margaret Gaither moved to Washington, they maintained their religious association with the Episcopal Church. In the records of St. John's Parish in Washington, near the White House, are recorded the baptisms of two of their children on 20 May 1820 — Eliza Ann, born 31 October 1816, and Sarah Amelia, born 29 August 1818. A notation records that they were baptized at home due to sickness, their mother and grandmother, Mrs. Come [Carew?] attending; their father had died of pulmonary complaints eleven months earlier. (NSDAR, District of Columbia, General Records Committee, Vol. 140, p. 8 transcribes the Gaither entry from St. John's Parish, Washington, D.C., *Baptisms in St. John's Church 1817-1870*). Presumably the children survived — John's brother Edward died in March, 1838, devising a life interest in his estate to his two sisters, then to the children of his two brothers, John (deceased), James, and Greenberry (deceased) (Newman, *Anne Arundel*, Rev. Ed., p. 105).
27. Baltimore, Maryland *Indentures* Book 2:378 (13 February 1807) and *Alexandria Herald*, 11 May 1812, hereinafter cited as AH.
28. AH, 20 May 1812.
29. *National Intelligencer* [D.C.], 30 May 1812, hereinafter cited as NI.
30. NI, 6 April 1813.
31. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1813.
32. Harold L. Peterson, *The American Sword 1775-1945* (Philadelphia: Ray Riling Arms Books Co., 1977, Revised Edition), pp. 65 and 98.
33. Information supplied by owner of the sword.

34. For example, ADG 5 October 1811 for the American cities, *Daily National Intelligencer* (hereinafter cited as DNI) 29 May 1817 for Liverpool, Sheffield and Birmingham, and DNI 19 April 1816 for London.
35. District of Columbia *Land Records*, AS43:243 and Essex County, New Jersey *Administration Accounts*, p. 292 (25 November 1810) Docket #976, Ephphras Hinsdale & Co., for inventory.
36. Samuel Williamson, *Account Book 1806-1812*, unpag. Manuscript in the collection of the Chester County Historical Society, Chester County, Pa.
37. DNI, 9 January 1817.
38. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1817.
39. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1817 and 29 May 1817.
40. *Ibid.*, 2 December 1817.
41. District of Columbia *Land Records* AS43:244 (9 October 1818).
42. *Ibid.*, AP40:73 memorandum attached to 1817 deed of trust.
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, AR42:286.
45. *Ibid.*, AS43:243, 244.
46. Newman, *Anne Arundel*. Rev. Ed., p. 126.
47. *Op. Cit.*, AU45:202. Newman misquotes the amount of debt on p. 126.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
49. Anne Arundel County, Maryland, *Wills* JG3:141 for Mary Gaither, 142 for Sally Gaither (both proved 6 February 1816); *Testamentary Papers*, Box 146, folder 47 includes receipts for slaves from Sally Gaither's estate, including Carolina (dated 26 October 1818).
50. Coincidentally, close family ties between the Carews and Gaithers are indicated in another District of Columbia record [*Wills*, JH2 (30 May 1822) unpag.] wherein Rosana Carew, the 15 year old orphan of Thomas Carew, deceased, chose as her guardian James Gaither and Charles E. Eckel; security for their faithful performance of duties was made by Trueman Beck and Greenberry Gaither.
51. *City of Washington Gazette*, 14 June 1819.
52. District of Columbia *Land Records* WB3:178.
53. *Op. Cit.*, 2 September 1819.
54. *Op. Cit.*, *Land*.
55. Alexandria Association, *Our Town 1749-1865 [an exhibition] at Gadsby's Tavern, Alexandria, Virginia* (Alexandria: Dietz Printing Co.: 1956), p. 35.
56. Acquisition notes on file at Curator's Office, White House, Washington, D.C.
57. Corcoran Gallery of Art, *A Century of Alexandria, District of Columbia, and Georgetown Silver 1750-1850* (Washington, D.C.: 1966), p. 16.
58. Kathryn Buhler, *Mount Vernon Silver* (Mount Vernon: Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union, 1957), p. 20.
59. David B. Warren, ed., *Southern Silver* (Houston: The Museum of Fine Arts, 1968), C-1-D.

60. Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association, *Alexandria Heritage: Antique Silver and Furniture*. Exhibit, April 25- May 30, 1976 at the Anthenaeum, Alexandria, Virginia, no catalogue. The "I. GAITHER" spoon was identified at the exhibit as the work of James Gaither. There was a James Gaither, silversmith, who apprenticed in Georgetown in 1806 and worked there until 1816, when he left the area. Since he used his middle initial in advertising — J. O. Gaither — and used the mark "I.O.G." in a rectangle on known silver, it does not seem likely that the "I.GAITHER" mark was used by James.



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